

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 01295 120945Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5224

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR
SUBJ:INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL SEMIANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT

UNDER SECTION 481 OF FAA

REF: STATE 083179

1. ACCOUNTING FUNCTION AND OTHER BUDGET AND FISCAL MATTERS
RELATING TO ANTI-NARCOTICS AID TO BURMA ARE HANDLED IN
WASHINGTON, NOT RANGOON. EMBASSY THEREFORE IS NOT ABLE TO
PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED IN PARAGRAPH 3C OF REFTEL.

2. WITH REGARD TO PARAGRAPH 3A REFTEL, BURMA'S CURRENT ILLICIT
PRODUCTION OF RAW OPIUM IS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
OF 300 METRIC TONS, THOUGH ESTIMATES RANGE FROM A LOW OF 200
TO A HIGH OF 400 TONS. OPIUM PRODUCTION VARIES WITH THE
WEATHER, THE EXTENT OF BURMA ARXU-INSURGENT FIGHTING IN
OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GUB POPPY
ERADICATION OPERATIOSS, AND MARKET CONSIDERATIONS. OPIUM
PRODUCED IN BURMA IS PROCESSED INTO HEROIN AT REFINERIES
LOCATED ALONG THE BURMA/THAI BORDER. TRADITIONALLY, THE BULK
OF THE HEROIN LEAVES BURMA THROUGH TRAFFICKING ROUTES INTO
NORTH THAILAND WITH MARGINAL AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS EXPORTED
OVER ROUTES THROUGH RANGOON AND SEAPORTS IN THE SOUTH AS WELL
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AS ACROSS THE WESTERN BORDER TO INDIA AND BANGLADESH. THESE
ALTERNATE ROUTES MAY TAKE ON ADDED SIGNIFICANCE IF THE GUB
AND RTG SUCCEED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DISRUPT DELIVERIES ALONG
THE TRADITIONAL ROUTES.

3. THE BURMESE CONTINUED TO MAKE PROGRESS DURING THE REPORTING
PERIOD IN THEIR ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN. IN EARLY DECEMBER 1977

THE GUB BEGAN ITS ANNUAL DRIVE TO ERADICATE OPIUM POPPIES. PARTIAL RETURNS SHOW THAT APPROXIMATELY 9,000 ACRES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED; THE FINAL TALLY IS EXPECTED TO BE HIGHER. THE 9,000 ACRES OF DESTROYED POPPY COULD HAVE PRODUCED AN ESTIMATED 48 METRIC TONS OF OPIUM. NO LARGE SCALE OPIUM CARAVANS WERE KNOWN TO HAVE TRAVELED FROM OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS IN NORTHERN BURMA TO THE THAI BORDER DURING THE SIX MONTHS UNDER REVIEW. THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT BORDER AREA REFINERIES RECEIVED SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF RAW OPIUM TO ALLOW A HIGH LEVEL OF HEROIN PRODUCTION. NO BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS WERE CONDUCTED AGAINST BORDER AREA REFINERY SITES DURING THE SIX MONTH PERIOD.

4. BURMESE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FACILITATED BY U.S. NARCOTICS CONTROL ASSISTANCE, PRINCIPALLY HELICOPTERS. THIS EQUIPMENT IS BEING WELL MAINTAINED AND IS UTILIZED UNDER A 1974 AGREEMENT, PROVIDING THAT IT BE USED PRIMARILY FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS PURPOSES. REFLECTING OUR STRONG MUTUAL INTEREST IN CURTAILING THE FLOW OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BURMESE IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD.

5. OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE GUB HAS DEMONSTRATED THE CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT EFFECTIVE ANTI-NARCOTICS MEASURES. THEY ARE SEVERELY HAMPERED, HOWEVER, BY THE PRESENCE OF ARMED INSURGENT FORCES IN MANY OF THE OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS. ALSO, UNCLASSIFIED

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THE ABSENCE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN BURMA AND THAILAND IN ANTI-NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN AN INHIBITING FACTOR AS IT AFFECTS ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS AGAINST TARGETS LOCATED ALONG THE THAI-BURMA BORDER.

6. THE FOLLOWING COMMODITIES AND SERVICES FOR THE NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM IN BURMA WERE RECEIVED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD:

A. AIRCRAFT - TWO FH 227B AIRPLANES, ONE BELL 205A -1 HELICOPTER, AND SPARE PARTS, MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES.

B. COMMUNICATIONS - FM-5 AND FM-1 TRANSCEIVER ACCESSORIES.

C. TRAINING - NONE.

D. PERSONNEL - ONE US INC MEMBER ASSIGNED TO THE PROGRAM ARRIVE ON MARCH 21, 1978.
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